



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Jessica Robinson, KCET (323) 953-5308; [jrobinson@kcet.org](mailto:jrobinson@kcet.org)  
Kenneth Shoji, San Manuel Band of Mission Indians  
909-864-8933; [kshoji@sanmanuel-nsn.gov](mailto:kshoji@sanmanuel-nsn.gov)

**KCET AND SAN MANUEL BAND OF MISSION INDIANS AWARD  
LOCAL LEADERS AND BROADCAST SPECIAL PROGRAMMING IN  
HONOR OF AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE MONTH**

**LOS ANGELES—October 29, 2010** - As part of its ongoing commitment to cultural diversity and in celebration of American Indian Heritage Month, KCET has partnered with San Manuel Band of Mission Indians to honor four extraordinary leaders from our local community in this very special inaugural awards ceremony. The American Indian Heritage Month Leadership Awards recipients include: **Michelle de Armas** (Pueblo of Isleta, New Mexico), **Richard Gomez** (Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, California), **Elton Naswood** (Navajo, Arizona), **Ian Skorodin** (Choctaw, Oklahoma). Each of these individuals has made contributions to local communities in Southern California in the areas of cultural/language preservation, social services, arts, business and education.

The American Indian Heritage Month Leadership Award recipients will be honored throughout the month of November on KCET with a short video profile featuring each honoree's story. KCET and the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians will also recognize the exemplary leadership and dedication of the recipients during an awards celebration hosted by Hattie Kauffman, Emmy® Award winning reporter and national news correspondent for the CBS Early Show in Los Angeles. The event will be held on Tuesday, November 9, 2010, at the KCET studios in Los Angeles. For more information or to attend the event please visit <http://www.kcet.org/aihm>.

“As part of KCET’s ongoing commitment to reflect the diversity of the region we serve, KCET is honored to partner with San Manuel Band of Mission Indians to pay tribute to the unsung heroes working so diligently on behalf of our American Indian communities; their achievements help improve the quality of life for all,” says Al Jerome, KCET president and CEO.

“San Manuel Band of Mission Indians is proud to partner with KCET to honor local leaders of the American Indian community during American Indian Heritage Month. The Leadership Awards reinforce our ongoing commitment to showcase the great work of people making a difference,” says Lynn Valbuena, Vice Chairwoman of the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians. “We hope that this event will bring awareness to the greater community of the unique contributions of Native people to all levels of society.”

The 2010 honorees are:

**Michelle de Armas-** Michelle de Armas serves as Program Coordinator of Diversity Development for Fox Entertainment Group, whose goal is to incorporate diverse voices into every aspect of the Fox business. Since 2008, she has also coordinated the Fox Journey to Excellence Program (JEP), an innovative mentoring project, and from 2007 has coordinated the American Indian Summer Institute Program (AISI). These initiatives are aimed at providing high school and college-aged students of underrepresented backgrounds an exploration of various career opportunities. de Armas has gone above and beyond her duties to provide students with a unique and rewarding experience through academic workshops, career development seminars, and mentorship programs. In addition, each summer de Armas brings together industry veterans with AISI members to create public service announcements that shed light on issues facing American Indian communities.

**Richard Gomez--** Richard Gomez, Vice Chairman of the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, has spent much of his life dedicated to the enrichment of his tribe and community at large, working tirelessly to ensure that his community stays self-sufficient and continues to grow. Under his leadership, the tribe has invested in a variety of successful business ventures, including its bolstering gaming operation, real estate and community development. Believing in the importance of service and education, Gomez and his fellow tribal leadership team members oversee the tribe’s foundation, which has donated over \$13 million to the community. He also helped establish the tribe’s education department where it focuses on providing services to children on and off the reservation by paying for childcare and school activities, as well as providing tuition for college and trade schools. In an effort to celebrate his tribe’s American Indian heritage, Gomez has resurrected the native language Samala, participated in traditional tomol crossings, and brought pow-wows back to his community.

**Elton Naswood-** Elton Naswood has spent most of his career dedicated to changing the stigma of HIV and AIDS in the American Indian community. He is

currently the Program Coordinator for the Red Circle Project (RCP) at AIDS Project Los Angeles, the only HIV prevention program in Los Angeles County that specifically targets the American Indian community through a variety of services and support groups. To raise awareness about HIV/AIDS prevention within the American Indian communities, Naswood regularly presents on HIV prevention and Two Spirit culture & history for service providers, and at conferences, colleges and a variety of community events. Additionally, Naswood serves on community advisory boards for organizations including the National Native American AIDS Prevention Center and the Office of Minority Health Resource Center.

**Ian Skorodin-** Ian Skorodin is an iconic American Indian filmmaker and philanthropist, who has produced award-winning films and television programs with an American Indian point of view. In addition to his film work, Skorodin founded the Barcid Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to the causes of indigenous people. The foundation is in the process of preserving all archival American Indian materials and provides multimedia production for related projects. Skorodin also founded the Los Angeles Skins Fest, a film festival that gives American Indians the opportunity to showcase their talent and gain distribution. Recognizing the importance of investing in our youth, he not only created a youth program for the LA Skins Fest, but has also taught at the Weengushk Film Institute in M'Chigeeng Canada.

In addition, KCET will also honor the rich and vibrant heritage of American Indian culture and history with primetime programs throughout November that will span a range of stories documenting the American Indian experience. Programming details are below.

**We Shall Remain: American Experience "Trail Of Tears"** (Monday, November 1, 2010, 9:00 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.)--*We Shall Remain: American Experience*, a five-part series, spans 300 years in U.S. history from the American Indian perspective. It begins in the 1600s with the Wampanoags who used their alliance with the English to strengthen their position in southern New England. It ends with the bold new leaders of the 1970s, who harnessed the momentum of the Civil Rights movement to forge a pan-Indian identity.

**Independent Lens "Reel Injun"** (Tuesday, November 2, 2010, 10:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.)-- Cree filmmaker Neil Diamond takes an entertaining, insightful, and often humorous look at the Hollywood Indian, exploring the portrayal of North American Natives through a century of cinema and examining the ways that the myth of "the Injun" has influenced the world's understanding—and misunderstanding—of Natives. Narrated by Diamond with infectious enthusiasm and good humor, *Reel Injun: On the Trail of the Hollywood Indian* is a loving look at cinema through the eyes of the people who appeared in its very first flickering images and have survived to tell their stories their own way.

### **Before There Were Parks: Yellowstone and Glacier Through Native Eyes**

(Monday, November 1, 2010, 10:30 p.m. - 11:00 p.m. encore presentations on Sunday, November 7, 1:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. and Sunday, November 21, 2010, 4:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.) For more than 12,000 years, the intermountain West's native peoples have called the lands known as Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks "home." This program explores modern indigenous perspectives on these great wilderness areas and explores both the cultural divide that separates modern times from the not-so-distant past and recent efforts by the National Park Service and native peoples to bring these disparate visions into greater harmony.

### **Choctaw Code Talkers** (Sunday, November 7, 2010, 3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.)—

*Choctaw Code Talkers* is an empowering chronicle of the Choctaw Soldiers as the original code talkers during World War I, a story which has been buried in history for nearly a hundred years. With testimonials from family members and Choctaw tribal leaders the program brings a unique perspective to these forgotten heroes and their wartime contributions.

### **6 Generations** (Sunday, November 14, 2010, 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.)-- 6

*Generations* explores the family history of Ernestine De Soto, an elderly Chumash American Indian whose mother was the last Chumash speaker. Spanning six generations, De Soto's family lineage reaches back to the arrival of Spanish conquistadors in Santa Barbara. In *6 Generations*, De Soto creates a unique link to the past by recounting this history through the voices of her female ancestors. Recollecting the work of anthropologist John Peabody Harrington—who researched De Soto's family for 49 years beginning in 1913—De Soto reveals the impact of loss of land, language and culture along with the fierce endurance of her ancestors.

### **About KCET**

On-air, online and in the community, KCET plays a vital role in the cultural and educational enrichment of Southern and Central California. Each month 3.6 million viewers watch KCET, which is the second most-watched public television station in the country and has the largest geographic reach of any public television station in California. KCET, which becomes the largest independent public television station in the country effective January 1, 2011, produces the Emmy® and Peabody Award-winning *SoCal Connected*, a hard-hitting prime-time weekly television news program that examines the issues and people of Southern

California. Throughout its more than 40-year history, KCET has won hundreds of major awards for its local and regional news and public affairs programming, its national drama and documentary productions, its quality educational family and children's programs, its outreach and community services and its website, [kcet.org](http://kcet.org). KCET is a donor-supported community institution. More than half of the funds raised to support KCET's operating budget come from individual support. For additional information about KCET productions, Web-exclusive content, programming schedules and community events, please visit [kcet.org](http://kcet.org).

### **About San Manuel Band of Mission Indians**

The San Manuel Band of Serrano Mission Indians is a federally recognized American Indian tribe located near the city of Highland, Calif. The Serrano Indians are the indigenous people of the San Bernardino highlands, passes, valleys and mountains who share a common language and culture. The San Manuel reservation was established in 1891 and recognized as a sovereign nation with the right of self-government. Since time immemorial, the San Manuel tribal community has endured change and hardship. Amidst these challenges the tribe continued to maintain its unique form of governance. Like other governments it seeks to provide a better quality of life for its citizens by building infrastructure, maintaining civil services and promoting social, economic and cultural development. Today San Manuel tribal government oversees many governmental units including the departments of fire, public safety, education and environment.

####